

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 26, 2011

CONTACT: Jeff Mammenga, Media Coordinator, (605) 773-6000,
Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us

South Dakota's Political Culture Up for Debate in New Book from State Historical Society

PIERRE, S.D.—First impressions of the political landscape in South Dakota tend towards an assumption of hard-line conservatism, but as a new book from the South Dakota State Historical Society shows, that conclusion barely scratches the surface of what constitutes political tradition in the Mount Rushmore state.

In *The Plains Political Tradition: Essays on South Dakota Political Culture*, editors Jon K. Lauck, John E. Miller and Donald C. Simmons, Jr., have drawn together 12 essays that consider the state's underlying political culture. Each essay addresses an aspect of history, politics or art, subtly exposing the contradictory nature of South Dakotans and shining light on the many elements that comprise the state's larger political tradition.

Distinguished authors from around the country consider topics such as war and peace, literature, environmentalism, the American Indian Movement, left-wing and liberal politics, immigration and defeat. With each essay, the discussion builds upon itself, allowing the reader to develop a more complete sense of where South Dakota fits into the political culture of modern society.

Jon Lauck is a historian and adviser to Sen. John Thune, R-SD; John Miller is professor emeritus of history at South Dakota State University in Brookings; and Don Simmons is professor of history and dean of the College of Public Service, Leadership, and Graduate Studies at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell.

The Plains Political Tradition is available for \$19.95 (plus shipping and tax where applicable) and can be purchased from most bookstores or ordered directly from the South Dakota State Historical Society Press. For more information, visit www.sdshspress.com or call (605) 773-6009.

-30-

The South Dakota State Historical Society is a division of the Department of Tourism. The Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism, the South Dakota Arts Council, and the State Historical Society. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen. The State Historical Society is headquartered at the South Dakota Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. The center houses the society's world-class museum, the archives, and the historic preservation, publishing and administrative/development offices. Call (605) 773-3458 or visit www.history.sd.gov for more information. The society also has an archaeology office in Rapid City; call (605) 394-1936 for more information.